

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1        1.        A method comprising:  
2            receiving a call at a gateway of a packetized network;  
3            directing the call for connection to a feature platform via the network;  
4            performing a service related to the call in the feature platform; and  
5            after performing the service, transferring the call to another location in the  
6            network to provide a connection between the gateway and the other  
7            location, the connection being independent of the feature platform.
  
- 1        2.        The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the packetized network is a  
2        voice network.
  
- 1        3.        The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing an  
2        authentication service as the service in the feature platform.
  
- 1        4.        The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2        validates a calling card number.
  
- 1        5.        The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2        validates a personal identification number.
  
- 1        6.        The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2        includes voice prompts.
  
- 1        7.        The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2        utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information as a basis for  
3        authentication.
  
- 1        8.        The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing a  
2        follow-me service as the service.
  
- 1        9.        The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the other location is an  
2        egress gateway.

1        10. A communication network comprising:  
2        a packet switched network including one or more gateways coupled to receive  
3                calls for the network requiring a feature service; and  
4        a feature platform coupled to connect to the calls received at the one or more  
5                gateways, provide the feature service and cause the calls to be  
6                redirected to another point on the network after the feature service is  
7                provided.

1        11. The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is  
2        an authentication service.

1        12. The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the  
2        authentication service includes voice prompting.

1        13. The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the  
2        authentication service utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information for  
3        authentication purposes.

1        14. The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is  
2        a follow-me service.

1        15. The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2        redirected from the feature platform to the other location on the network using a  
3        media gateway control protocol.

1        16. The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2        routed to the feature platform according to a destination number identification service  
3        (DNIS).

1        17. The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2        received from a publicly switched telephone network (PSTN).

1        18. A method of authenticating a call received at a packetized voice  
2        network comprising:

3 receiving the call requiring authentication at any one of a plurality of ingress  
4 points for the network;  
5 routing the call from the ingress point to an authentication server;  
6 authenticating the call in the authentication server; and  
7 routing the call to an egress point on the network instead of the authentication  
8 server after authenticating the call.

1 19. A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network,  
2 the method comprising:

3 receiving at a gateway to a packet-switched network, an information stream  
4 including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal  
5 outside the packet-switched network;  
6 directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an  
7 authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between  
8 the voice terminal and the authentication service; and  
9 upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information  
10 stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information  
11 stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with  
12 a target device.

1 20. The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising:  
2 authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the  
3 authentication service.

1 21. The method as recited in claim 20,  
2 wherein the authenticating includes bi-directional communication of encoded  
3 voice-band traffic between the voice terminal and the authentication  
4 service via the gateway.

1 22. The method as recited in claim 19,  
2 wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier  
3 supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice  
4 terminal.

- 1       23. The method as recited in claim 22,  
2       wherein a second destination identifier is supplied from the voice terminal  
3                  coincident with the authenticating; and  
4       wherein the second destination identifier is selective for the target device.
- 1       24. The method as recited in claim 22,  
2       wherein the first destination identifier includes a phone number corresponding  
3                  to the authentication service; and  
4       wherein a second destination identifier selective for the target device is  
5                  supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating.
- 1       25. A method of operating a packet switched network comprising:  
2       receiving at an authentication service in the network a request to authenticate  
3                  an endpoint for a pay-per-stream distribution of media;  
4       upon authentication by the authentication service, directing the pay-per-  
5                  stream distribution of media from a feature server in the network  
6                  providing the pay-per-stream distribution of media as an information  
7                  stream; and  
8       providing via the packet-switched network a connection between the feature  
9                  server providing the information stream and the endpoint.
- 1       26. The method as recited in claim 25 wherein the authentication request  
2       originates with the endpoint.
- 1       27. The method as recited in claim 26 wherein the connection between the  
2       feature server providing the information stream and the endpoint includes an egress  
3       point of the packet switched network.
- 1       28. An apparatus comprising:  
2       a packet switched network including one or more egress points coupled to an  
3                  external telephone network; and  
4       a feature platform coupled to control outgoing calls for call agents, the  
5                  outgoing calls connecting respective destination numbers and

6           respective ones of the call agents through egress points, connections  
7           between the destination numbers and the respective calling agents  
8           being independent of the feature platform after each of the calls is  
9           connected.

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